



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## **WSDA issues fines for pesticide violations for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) issued fines totaling \$15,700 and imposed license suspensions during the first quarter of 2011 for violations of state pesticide laws and rules. Fines ranged from \$450 to \$8,000 for incidents that involved spray drift that damaged a lentil crop and operating a pesticide spray service with a suspended license. The largest number of cases involved failure to provide farm employees with personal protective equipment and decontamination supplies when working with pesticides. WSDA completed investigations and issued the following fines or license suspensions:

Jason Flodin, Primeland Cooperatives, St. John, was fined \$450 and his commercial operator license was suspended for seven days. Last May Flodin applied a herbicide mix to a field of wheat stubble near St. John. The herbicides drifted onto a nearby field of lentils damaging up to 20 acres of the crop.

Quality Spray Service, Yakima, agreed to pay \$8,000 and accept a license suspension of five days. WSDA alleged that Quality Spray Service continued to operate during a period when the company's pesticide license was suspended.

While conducting inspections at farms for compliance with state and federal Worker Protection Standards, WSDA compliance staff found common problem areas. In most cases, agricultural employers had failed to provide adequate decontamination supplies or personal protective equipment for pesticide handlers. In some cases, personal protective equipment was not properly cleaned and maintained. Training on pesticide safety was also insufficient at times. Fines related to Worker Protection Standards inspections conducted last year were issued to:

- Wayne Gardner, Othello, \$1,500
- Jayhawk Orchard, LLC, Yakima, \$900
- Gilbert Orchards, LLC, Yakima, \$700
- Custom Orchards, Inc., Brewster, \$2,500
- Stemilt Ag Services, LLC, Wenatchee, \$750
- KS Orchards, Inc., Boise, Idaho, \$900

### **Penalty matrix used by WSDA to levy fines and suspensions**

A penalty matrix is used to ensure penalties are uniform and fair. The matrix takes into account the seriousness of the violation, whether it is a first or a repeat offense, and whether there are any aggravating or

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mitigating factors involved. Larger penalties often reflect repeat offenses or multiple violations within the same incident.

WSDA enforces state and federal laws to protect people, property and the environment against the improper use of pesticides. Staff also provides technical assistance to the pesticide industry and consumers, and enforces the rules on structural inspections for wood destroying organisms, such as wood rot, carpenter ants or termites. The agency registers more than 11,000 pesticide products, licenses about 22,000 pesticide applicators, dealers, consultants and structural pest inspectors.

For more information on pesticide compliance and licensing, go to the WSDA website at [agr.wa.gov/Portals/PF/](http://agr.wa.gov/Portals/PF/) or call (877) 301-4555.

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